

One Year After the Summit – From Political Commitments to Effective Action

Remarks by Vadim N. Grishin Executive Director for the Russian Federation, The World Bank

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First of all I would like to thank Mr Zoellick for his speech, as well as for being so attentive to this issue. Russian Government and our leaders pay special attention to tiger protection problem. If you go to the personal website of our Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, on the first page you will find a link to the Amur tiger program, and a number of other programs, aimed at conserving biodiversity, among the priority issues under his personal supervision. We believe there are opportunities to pay this issue attention under the presidency of Russia in APEC.

As for the past year outcomes, work on the conservation of tigers in Russia is conducted in the **three main directions**: Protection of natural habitat, anti-poaching activity and public awareness and human-wildlife conflict prevention. In number of areas we have made some progress. However, some of the problems have yet to be resolved.

With regard to **protection of natural habitat**, a number of measures were taken in Russian Federation, including the following:

- A ban was imposed on the logging of Korean pine, a key source of food for prey of tigers. This concerns mainly the Forest of Bikin River, which is nominated now to become a UNESCO World heritage.
- We continue studying the biology of Amur tiger using radio and GPS tracking. In the spring of 2011 the four new tiger was equipped of the GPS collars.
- We are in a process of preparation the full-size project proposal for funding from GEF 5 to strengthen direct conservation actions and capacity, monitoring, wildlife-based ecotourism.

In this area we cooperate closely with other countries.

- A Russia-China expert working group on transboundary management of protected areas was established and now there is a regular exchange of results of monitoring tiger and ungulates between experts of Russia and China.
- A Sino-Russian Agreement on cooperation in tiger conservation was signed between Primorsky Region (Russia) and Jilin (China) province.
- Standardized scientific monitoring protocols were developed and now Russian Academy of Science works in close cooperation with Hokkaido University, Japan on conducting genetic analysis of gathered materials.

- We are working on creating a nature refuge “Sredneussuriysky” as an ecological corridor through the Strelnikov ridge to connect Sikhote-Alin ridge in Russia with Wandashan in China.

We made a number of important steps aimed at poaching prevention:

- The work in underway on the amendment of the Criminal Code and the Code on Administrative Violations to increase punishments for killing tigers, storage and transportation of tigers, body parts and derivatives. The draft of new legislation is to be discussed in the Russian Federal Parliament.
- Customs activity to control trafficking of tiger parts and derivatives is strengthened, police dogs were trained under special program to search for derivatives, including those of tigers. As a result three large channels of illegal trade and export are blocked by Customs this year.
- Primorsky and Khabarovsk Administrations strengthened anti-poaching brigades. This includes fully granting rights of regional rangers, 10% increase in their monthly allowances and 25 new staff hired. Creation of digital system and database for recording and monitoring poachers is underway.

In the area of public awareness and human-wildlife conflict prevention we are focusing on organizing regional Olympiads, children’s art and photographic competitions, festivals, celebrations, gatherings, devoted to tiger conservation. The 12th Annual Tiger Day Festival in Vladivostok, Primorsky Region, and Moscow was carried out this September. We are planning to continue this practice in the future in other regions. We are working also on creating conflict tiger response teams in Primorsky and Khabarovsk Regional Administrations for preventing and resolving tiger-human conflicts, public awareness and education.

Despite considerable progress, many **challenges still remain**, including:

- Direct poaching for tiger because of the demand for it in Russia and abroad
- Reducing the number of ungulates in the northern part of the tiger range because of snowy winters
- Quality deterioration of habitat is due to illegal logging and fires
- Need for technical equipment of newly created structures.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the issue of tiger conservation is transboundary in nature. Notwithstanding the importance of in-country work, the coordination of our efforts and effective cooperation are the key issues. In this respect I would like again to thank the World Bank Group, and Mr. Zoellick personally for the active participation in the initiative. Your efforts, as well as the efforts of our Prime Minister Mr. Putin and other leaders, give us ground to achieve sustainable positive results in this important and noble mission.